



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

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Interoperability Montana Technical Committee Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Interoperability Montana Technical Committee (IMTC) met in Helena on Monday, May 19. Chair Bob McWilliams reported on Executive Committee decision making related to the Dept. of Homeland Security funding recommendation to complete infrastructure backbone to the eastern part of the state.

Reports from the Frequency, Encryption, Network Design and Dispatch Connectivity Sub-Committees were given. During the encryption report, it was reported that rules have been written to allow only bona fide law enforcement or public safety agency access to key loaders. It also was recommended that personnel background checks be required.

Bob McWilliams reported that Statements of Work (SOWs) on four sites in the I-15/90 consortium are near completion, and will be presented to the IMTC Executive Committee soon because they are needed to apply for a NEPA. The group discussed the complexity of NEPAs and the possibility of using qualified NEPA contractors.

Consortium reports were given in conjunction with a review of the IM Site Build-Out Map to ensure that the work plan is up to date. Mark reported that three guidelines have been used to establish work plan priorities. The first is to complete the Northern Tier; the second is to complete projects that have already begun, and the third priority is new projects.

The group reviewed details of a radio equipment that is available for purchase from the Northern Cheyenne Tribe and assigned Dale Osborne to investigate compatibility. Several Decision/Information Requests (DIRs) were reviewed and action taken on them, including approval of infrastructure upgrades at the Big Mountain, Blacktail and BNSF Railway sites, advancing the trunking schedule at Big Mountain to 2008, investigating and approving back-up power options for the Divide site, securing bids for tower analysis work at the Fox Creek and Makoshika sites, and proceeding with clean-up work in the shelter at the Fallon site. The technical change order for microwave installation on the Kalispell Water Tower also was approved.

Mark Canton, Motorola, presented technical specifications of simulcast trunking sub-systems

and addressed their pros and cons. Simulcast trunking can be used in regions where frequencies are scarce, and it also extends the footprint of a frequency. Mark also clarified technical challenges related to remote dispatch connectivity at the Blaine County Dispatch Center and reviewed a solution using fractionalized T-1s.

The next IMTC meeting will be Monday, June 23 at the State Capitol in Helena, at 9:00 am.

Western Interoperability Consortium Meeting

By Pete Mohan pmohan@mt.gov

The Western Interoperability Communications Consortium (WICC) met in Polson on May 20. Project Director George Gupton reported on the recent Interoperability Montana Project Directors (IMPD and IM Governance Committee meetings. Members discussed Interlocal Agreements (ILA) and staffing requirements that have been proposed by the sub-committee.

Board members reviewed site requirements in Mineral and Ravalli Counties and technical details for tying the region into the IM System. Funding of trunking sites also was discussed. Members were re-introduced to Rozyln Haley, Dispatch Coordinator in the Office of Public Safety at the University of Montana.

The next meeting is scheduled at 10:00 am on Tues., June 17 at the Ravalli County Courthouse.

Eastern Tier Interoperability Consortium Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Eastern Tier Interoperability Consortium (ETIC) met in Glendive on Wed., May 21. Denny Palmer, Richland County, was nominated as the new consortium chair and Jim Skillestad, Dawson County, was nominated as vice chair. An electronic vote will be taken since a quorum was not present. New members also are needed for the ETIC Technical Committee.

Denny explained the importance of having an up-to-date needs assessment and said the existing spreadsheet could easily be updated. He will distribute the spreadsheet to consortium members and will set a date by which updates need to be accomplished. Norman Parrent volunteered to assist with this effort.

Chief Michaels distributed a copy of the FY08 Dept. of Homeland Security (DHS) funding priorities



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that continues to build out infrastructure to the eastern part of the state and connects the Lewis and Clark ring to the Northern Tier. He also reiterated the importance of signing letters of support for the proposed congressional appropriation.

Sherry Evans, Northrop Grumman, provided a technical update about work taking place at Fallon, Fox Creek and Makoshika sites. Chief Michaels explained COPS Subscriber Unit grant funding and highlighted items from the recent IM Project Directors (IMPD) and IM Governance Committee (IMGC) meetings. The IMPD wants to hire an executive director, and interested persons are asked to submit resumes to George Gupton, the new chair of the Staffing Committee. A single point of contact is vital.

The next meeting will be on Wed. June 25 at 10:00 am at a location to be announced. Conference calling and possible web conferencing options are being investigated.

Big Sky 11 Consortium Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Big Sky 11 Interoperability Consortium met Thurs., May 22, at the Bighorn County Courthouse in Hardin. Project Director Ed Auker welcomed several local commissioners and county agency representatives.

Dale Osborne, Montana Highway Patrol, gave an update on the Interoperability Montana Network Map and specific sites in the Big Sky 11 consortium. Wing Spooner, Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB), gave an update on the last IM Project Directors (IMPD) meeting. Sherry Evans, Northrop Grumman, provided information about constructions projects within Big Sky 11 and explained the progress of the microwave path. She also reported on the recent Deadman Butte procurement.

Mark Canton, Motorola, was asked about hospital participation in the IM System. He reported that several hospitals along the Northern Tier are participating and St. Peter's Hospital in Helena is fully compatible. Hospitals in Harlowton, Glendive and Miles City either have or are working at having compatible trunking and encryption-capable equipment.

Ray Hetherington, Wheatland County Dispatch Supervisor, provided a report on the recent IM Technical Committee (IMTC) meeting and distributed handouts on trunking simulcast

technology. The group discussed consolidated dispatch centers, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), training issues and frequencies. Mark Canton gave a status report on progress along the Northern Tier. Specific sites within the Big Sky 11 consortium also were discussed.

The next Big Sky 11 Consortium meeting will begin at 10:00 am on Thurs., June 26, at the Fire Hall in Columbus.

Upcoming Meetings

May 28

Tri-County Consortium

Helena • 10:00 am

DOC Annex Conf. Rm.; Behind 515 N. Sanders St.

June 2

IMGC Finance Sub-Committee

Helena • 9:00 am - Noon

Anderson & ZurMuehlen • 828 Great Northern Blvd.

June 2

IM Governance Committee

Helena • Noon - 5:00 pm

DOC Annex Conf. Rm.; Behind 515 N. Sanders St.

June 3

IM Project Directors (IMPD) Meeting

Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm • State Capitol

June 5 (Please note date change)

Northern Tier (NTIP)

Havre • 9:00 am • Great Northern Inn, 1345 1st St.

June 11

Central Montana Consortium (CMICC)

Great Falls • 10:00 am • Wheat Building, 750 6th Street SW

June 11

South Central Montana Consortium (SCMIC)

Livingston • 10:00 am

Park County Courthouse, 414 East Callender Street

June 11

Statewide Interoperable Executive Council (SIEC)

Helena • 10:00 am • Location to be announced

June 16

Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) Consortium

Bozeman • 10:00 am • City Center Motel, 507 W Main St.

June 17

Western Interoperability Comm. Consortium (WICC)

Hamilton • 10:00 am • Ravalli County Courthouse, 215 S. 4th St.

June 19

I-15/90 Corridor Consortium

Butte • 10:00 am • Chamber of Commerce; 1000 George St.

June 23

IM Technical Committee (IMTC) Meeting

Helena • 9:00 am • State Capitol

June 25

Eastern Tier Consortium (ETIC)

Glendive • 10:00 am

Law Enforcement Center; 440 Colorado Blvd.

June 26

Big Sky 11 Consortium

Columbus • 10:00 am • Fire Hall, 2305 8th Ave N.